

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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SUBJECT: MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS MARCH 30

REF: ATHENS 1284

1. FOLLOWING CONFERENCE WITH MININTERIOR FEB 22, PM CARAMANLIS ANNOUNCED MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE MAR 30, WITH A SECOND ROUND RUNOFF ELECTIONS APRIL 6 IN TOWNS OF MORE THAN 5,000 IF NO ABSOLUTE MAJORITY IS WON BY ANY CANDIDATE FOR MAYOR. CARAMANLIS STATEMENT REGISTERED AWARENESS OF OPPOSITION CRITICISM OF HIS TIMING OF THE ELECTIONS: "THE HOLDING OF (MUNICIPAL) ELECTIONS WITHIN A SHORT TIME WAS CONSIDERED NECESSARY TO COMPLETE THE PROCEDURE FOR THE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRATIC NORMALITY." HE AGAIN STRESSED THAT NEW DEMOCRACY WOULD NOT PROPOSE ITS OWN CANDIDATES, THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT WANT TO POLITICIZE THE ELECTIONS IN ANY WAY, AND VOTERS WOULD SELECT THE BEST AND MOST CAPABLE CANDIDATES "WITHOUT BEING INFLUENCED BY POLITICAL CRITERIA AND ANY PARTY SUGGESTIONS OR AIMS."

2. ALL OPPOSITION PARTIES HAVE CRITICIZED THE MARCH DATE AS PREMATURE IN VIEW OF THE INCOMPLETE NATIONAL
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DEJUNTIZATION OPROGRAM AND BECAUSE IT PRECLUDES ANY

POSSIBILITY OF NON-REGISTERED VOTERS, AND 18-21
POTENTIAL VOTERS, BEING ENFRANCHISED IN TIME TO
VOTE. THEY HAVE AS WELL RESERVED THEIR POSITION
ON PM'S CALL FOR NON-PARTISAN CANDIDACIES. GEORGE
MAVROS SAID ON BEHLAF OF CENTER UNION/NEW FORCES
THAT "EIGHT MONTHS HAVE ELAPSED AND NOT ONE SENTENCE
HAS YET BEEN PRONOUNCED AGAINST THOSE RESPONSIBLE
FOR THE SEVEN YEARS OF THE JUNTA...UNDER THE CIR-
CUMSTANCES ELECTIONS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS
OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN POSTPONED UNTIL THE PENALIZATION OF ALL."
ANDREAS PAPANDREOU CONDEMNED THE "UNJUSTIFIABLE HASTE
AND (THE CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS) WITHOUT A CONSTITUTION
WHICH COULD DEFINE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE
GOVT AND LOCAL GOVT." MIRRORING A MAVROS
PLEDGE, PAPANDREOU SAID THAT HIS SOCIALIST PARTY WOULD
FAVOR CERTAIN PROGRESSIVE AND DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES.
SPOKESMEN FOR THE FAR LEFT PARTIES ALSO HAVE SAID
THEY WILL LEND ORGANIZATIONAL WEIGHT TO SELECTED
CANDIDATES IN SOME CITIES. KATHIMERINI REPORTED
FEB 23 THAT IOANNIS PAPATHEODOROU, THE CURRENT
INTERIM CHAIRMAN OF THE ATHENS MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
AND A POLITICAL INDEPENDENT, WILL BE ENDORSED BY ALL
MARXIST PARTIES AND BY PASOK, AND POSSIBLY BY CU/NF.
GEORGE PLYTAS, TWICE-ELECTED CONSERVATIVE MAYOR,
1961-64 AND 1964-67, HAS ALREADY ANNOUNCED AS AN
INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE.
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